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April 7, 1947

Mr. Clyde P. Fickes,
Regional Director, War Assets Administration
Mode-O-Day Building
Los Angeles 15, California

Dear Sir:

If, as suggested in recent press releases, Fort Huachuca in Arizona is declared surplus to the War Department, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission is highly desirous of procuring, under any possible arrangement, that portion of the land originally withdrawn for military purposes in 1881, to establish a wildlife study and management area thereon for public use and benefit.

The Commission is empowered by law to acquire lands, buildings, etc., by gift, purchase, condemnation or lease, and to administer land areas of any ownership under cooperative agreement. Our preference of method would be in the order named above, and our ultimate objective to devote the area primarily to study and production of various species of game birds, animals and fish for public use.

The area is peculiarly adapted to such purpose in that it offers:

1. Relatively high productivity.
2. Varied life zones from 4000 to 8500 feet elevations.
3. Environmental conditions suited to many kinds of birds and animals.
4. Organic natural resources probably as little used or abused by man as any to be found within the state.
5. The most southerly possible wildlife range of its type in the United States.

In view of the unique inherent qualifications of the area for the purposes intended, its disposition for such use, under the ownership by or administration of the State of Arizona would be amply justified by the fact that it would continue to be developed and maintained for the benefit of all of the people.

Additional advantage might well lie in the fact that the area would be immediately and identically available if needed by the War Department at some future date.

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Development and uses of the site, if acquired by the Commission would include:

1. Scientific investigation of wildlife species.
2. Restoration of historically present birds or animals if no longer there.
3. Development of optimal game populations.
4. Cropping of animal surplus by public hunting.
5. Vegetative and range management studies.
6. Establishment of a herd of buffalo on the lower grass range.
7. Possible establishment of game and/or fish hatchery to serve southern Arizona.
8. Designation of adequate public recreational grounds within the area.

Game species known to have inhabited the site include white-tailed deer, desert mule deer, antelope, squirrels, black bears, wild turkeys, Gambel quail, Scaled quail, Mearns quail, mourning doves, band-tailed pigeons and white-winged doves. Many non-game species are recorded there, so many and so varied, in fact that the location has long been especially attractive to all ornithologists and mammalogists. The occurrence of tropical species rarely recorded elsewhere in the United States further enhances its value from the scientist's viewpoint.

The area would, of course, be open to all federal, state and private agencies for scientific investigation and any other purposes not in conflict with the state's management of the wildlife thereon.

Your sympathetic consideration of our wish to secure administration of this unusual and strategically important area will be highly appreciated. We sincerely doubt that it could be put to a higher use.

We request your advice as to how we may best proceed to insure the realization of our desire, and solicit whatever aid your office may be in a position to offer.

Yours very truly,

H. L. REID
State Game and Fish Director